



Western Australian Curriculum

Humanities and Social Sciences

Glossary | Pre-primary–Year 10

For implementation in 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

Kaya. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) acknowledges that our offices are on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and that we deliver our services on the country of many traditional custodians and language groups throughout Western Australia. The Authority acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We offer our respect to Elders past and present.

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A

absolute majority

The minimum number of votes required, which is more than half of all votes – that is, 50 per cent of the total vote plus one – to make a democratic decision by a group.

active citizenship

The involvement and informed participation in the civic and political activities of society at local, state, national, regional and global levels.

allocation (of resources)

How scarce resources (factors of production) are distributed among producers, and how scarce goods and services are apportioned among consumers.

ancient

Historical period from 60 000 years ago to the fall of the Roman Empire in Western Europe c. 500 AD (CE), characterised by the existence of written evidence, cultural practices and social organisation.

***anno Domini* (AD)**

A dating method in Western societies which uses the birth of Christ as a marker to reference events in the past, present or future. It means ‘in the year of our Lord’.

Apology to the Stolen Generations (the)

A formal apology given to members of the Stolen Generations in 2008 by the Prime Minister on behalf of the Australian Parliament, and between 1997 and 1999 by all state and territory parliaments.

archaeology

The scientific study of the past through the excavation and analysis of artefacts, structures and other tangible evidence, with the aim of understanding past human societies and cultures.

artefact

An object made or changed by humans for their use (such as a stone tool, metal sword, letter or plastic toy) that gives insight into how people lived or is of historical interest.

Australian democracy

A system of government based on the Australian Constitution, a constitutional monarch, liberal democratic values, representation, and features of Westminster and Washington parliamentary processes.

B

balance of power

The influence held by minor parties and/or independents in Australian Parliaments, whose support is crucial for the major parties to pass legislation when they do not hold an outright majority.

before the Common Era (BCE)

A dating method used globally as a marker to reference events in the past, referring to the years before the birth of Christ, with no year zero.

belief system

A set of principles or tenets which together form the basis of a philosophy, moral code or religion.

bicameral

The Australian Parliament is bicameral, which means there are two houses. The Senate – which is also known as the upper house – and the House of Representatives – which is also known as the lower house.

biodiversity

The variety of living organisms and the ecosystems they form. Biodiversity has direct value as consumable or useful commodities, indirect value through the provision of ecosystem services and intrinsic value independent of its utility to humans.

biome

A major terrestrial vegetation region, such as a tropical forest, temperate grassland or desert; similar biomes occur around the world in similar climatic zones.

budget

A financial planning tool that gives an overview of income and expenses to plan for and achieve financial objectives.

burden of proof

The legal principle where a duty – or ‘burden’ – is placed on a party in a court action to prove or disprove disputed facts before the court will make a judgement.

business

An organisation or enterprise engaged in producing or buying and selling goods and services, usually for profit.

business cycle

An economic model that illustrates the cyclical nature of expansions and contractions in the economy, typically measured by gross domestic product over time.

C

cabinet

An executive body of government in Australia, comprising of senior ministers and headed by the Prime Minister, Premier or Chief Minister. It makes decisions on policy issues and directs the legislative program.

candidate

An individual who nominates to be elected to a seat in state or federal parliament as a representative of a community or region.

capital

All equipment (machinery, buildings, infrastructure) used by human labour in the process of production. For example, a secretary uses a computer, a bricklayer uses a trowel and a farmer uses a plough.

circular flow model

An economic model that illustrates the movement of money, resources, goods and services through the economy. The simple two-sector model illustrates the relationships between households and firms, while the five-sector model introduces leakages and injections of money through the financial, government and international sectors.

citizen

A person who holds citizenship of an entity, such as a country, and who is a member of a political community which grants certain rights and privileges to its citizens, and in return expects them to act responsibly, such as to obey their country's laws.

citizenship

The legal status of full membership of a nation acquired by birth or application, with civil (rights, responsibilities), political (participation, representation) and social (contribution) commitments.

civic life

Participation in civic, political, legal or community affairs. For example, investigating an issue, voting in an election, expressing an opinion or volunteering for an environmental group.

civics

The identifiable body of knowledge, skills and understandings relating to the organisation and working of society. It refers to a nation's political and social heritage, democratic processes, government, public administration and legal system.

civil rights

Legal protections provided to ensure individuals receive equal treatment under the law, protecting them from discrimination based on characteristics like race, gender, age, religion or nationality.

climate

The long-term average (minimum 30 years) of weather conditions at a place, classified into distinctive types. For example, tropical, dry, temperate, polar or Mediterranean.

climate change

Change in the long-term weather patterns and averages, such as those for temperature and precipitation.

colonisation

The act of setting up a colony away from one's place of origin. With humans, it can be seen negatively, because it tends to involve an invading culture taking control over an indigenous population.

Common Era (CE)

A dating method used globally as a marker to reference events in the past, referring to the years after the birth of Christ, with no year zero.

community

A group of people who share common interests, values or a geographic location, and interact with each other.

competitive advantage

The ability of a business to sell more of a product, operate at a lower cost or better meet the needs of consumers. This usually implies the business is more profitable than its competitors.

compulsory voting

A system in which electors are required by law to vote in both state and federal elections, by either attending a polling place on election day or voting by mail. If an eligible voter does not vote, they may be subject to fines or community service. It is compulsory for Australian citizens 18 years and over to enrol to vote.

conscription

Development occurring in times of war and involving compulsory enlistment for military service.

constitution

The fundamental principles on which a state or other organisation (such as a club) is governed. Usually this takes the form of a legal document setting out specific powers for the government or governing of that entity.

constitutional monarchy

A form of government where a monarch is head of state and whose role (e.g. formal or ceremonial) and powers (e.g. issuing a writ for an election) are defined in the nation's constitution.

consumer

A person or group that purchases or uses goods and services produced in an economy.

conventions

Unwritten rules of political procedure based on traditional, established practices that are widely accepted. Australia's political system has adopted many of the unwritten conventions of the British Westminster system. Conventions may defy the constitution. For example, the procedure for the appointment of Australia's Governor-General.

Country/Place

A Country is a space mapped out by physical or intangible boundaries that individuals or groups of Aboriginal peoples occupy and regard as their own. It is a space with varying degrees of spirituality. A Place is a space mapped out by physical or intangible boundaries that individuals or groups of Torres Strait Islander peoples occupy and regard as their own. It is a space with varying degrees of spirituality.

custodial responsibility

The obligation that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples care for the Country/Place on which they live, even if they are not traditional owners of that Country/Place. Traditional owners have primary responsibility for Country/Place.

D

Deep Time

A framework to describe immense scales of geological time used by geologists, archaeologists and anthropologists to investigate the past. For example, the lives of early people.

demand

The amount of a good or service that consumers are willing and able to purchase at a particular price and point in time.

democracy

A system of government based on the people of an entity, that is, 'government by the people'; a form of government where the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected representatives under a free and fair electoral system.

democratic values

Values that reflect a society's democratic way of life. Respect, equality, fairness and freedom are some examples of Australia's democratic values.

direct action

The use of strategies to build awareness of an issue, call for change, build support for a proposal, influence others or settle a dispute within the bounds of the law.

diversity

The mix of people in a group or society; that is, differences in factors such as age, ability, culture and religion and/or in how people identify in relation to factors such as gender and sexuality.

division of power

The vesting of powers within different levels of government. Under the Australian Constitution, the Commonwealth Government was vested with specific powers while the states retained general powers.

double majority

The referendum outcome required for the Australian Constitution to be changed, involving the majority of voters in the majority of states voting in favour of a proposed change.

E

economic growth

An increase in the quantity of goods and services produced in an economy over a period of time, characterised by an increasing ability of society to satisfy the needs and wants of its people.

economic indicator

Information about economic performance that is used to measure an economy's performance. For example, gross domestic product, inflation, unemployment rates and interest rates.

economic performance

A measure of achievement of economic objectives using a variety of economic indicators. For example, gross domestic product, employment, building approvals, retail sales or inflation (Consumer Price Index).

economics

A social science (study of human behaviour) that studies the decisions made by individuals, households, businesses, governments and other groups about how scarce resources are allocated in attempting to satisfy unlimited needs and wants.

economy

A process or system which coordinates resource allocation for the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services within and across countries.

ecosystem

A functioning unit of the environment defined by a complex set of relationships among its living organisms and its non-living components, where all organisms and components are interdependent.

election

An agreed voting process for citizens to express a preference for a candidate to represent their community or region. In Australia, elections are administered by the Australian Electoral Commission.

emerging technologies

Innovations and advancements in science, engineering and information technology which have the potential to significantly impact society and industries.

enterprise

Providing an impetus, such as good ideas, skills, organisation or vision, to be successful.

entrepreneur

An innovative person who sets up a business to exploit market opportunities, and plans for and manages financial objectives, risks and rewards with the aim of being successful and profitable.

environmental management

The systematic approach to overseeing and regulating human activities to mitigate their impact on the environment, ensuring sustainable development and conservation of natural resources.

environmental world view

A set of beliefs and values that gives a person a sense of their behaviour towards Earth. It could be anthropocentric (human-centred), biocentric (life-centred) or ecocentric (Earth-centred).

equity

The perceived fairness of the way scarce resources are used and the way the benefits of production are distributed.

executive

One of the three branches of government, the role of the executive branch is to oversee the implementation of policies and the administration of law, which is undertaken by public servants. This includes the Prime Minister, ministers, government departments and agencies who are responsible for specific areas of public policy.

export

Selling goods or services to another country for the purposes of trade.

externality

A cost or benefit associated with the production or consumption of a good or service that affects the wellbeing of third parties or society more generally.

F

factors of production

Resources used in the production of goods and services, classified as land, labour, capital and enterprise.

federalism

A system of government in which powers and responsibilities are divided between a national government and separate governments in states or territories.

Federation (Australia's)

The process by which six self-governing British colonies came together as states in a unified country known as the Commonwealth of Australia.

feudalism

Development affecting the organisation of medieval society, where a noble gave protection, shelter and food to those peasants who worked the noble's land and promised support.

food security

When all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs for a healthy life. (FAO, n.d.)

Freedom Ride

An event in the form of activism that raises awareness of the experiences or rights of a particular group. For example, Aboriginal people in New South Wales.

G

geomorphic hazard

Natural events originating from the lithosphere, including volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis and mass movement (landslides or avalanches).

Gini coefficient

A measure of income or wealth distribution within an economy. A coefficient of 0 represents perfect equality, and a coefficient of 1 represents perfect inequality. This distribution may also be illustrated by a Lorenz curve.

global citizen

A person who understands their rights and responsibilities at a global level; that is, a personal identity which transcends geographical and political borders, with rights and responsibilities that are derived from being human.

globalisation

The increased interconnectedness and interdependence of people and countries resulting from the expanding integration of trade, finance, people and ideas in one global marketplace.

governor-general

A representative of a monarch who is the head of state and whose role and powers are defined in a nation's constitution. In practice, the representative performs constitutional and ceremonial duties.

gross domestic product (GDP)

The total value of final goods and services produced in a country in a period of time.

H

hazard

A threat arising from environmental processes or human activities that has the potential to cause loss of life, injury, property damage, socio-economic disruption or environmental degradation.

Holocaust (the)

Development in the 1930s and 1940s mostly in sites across Germany involving the mass-scale killing of about six million Jewish people, as well as Romani people, homosexuals and other people.

Human Development Index (HDI)

A tool developed by the United Nations to measure and rank countries' levels of social and economic development based on four criteria: life expectancy at birth, mean years of schooling, expected years of schooling and gross national income per capita.

human rights

The basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled, often held to include the right to life and liberty, freedom of thought and expression, and equality before the law.

human wellbeing

The quality of life of a population. This can be measured by objective indicators, such as life expectancy, educational attainment and income, or by subjective measures of how people perceive the quality of their life, as revealed by surveys of happiness.

imperialism

An ideology affecting the organisation of societies, involving a nation expanding its authority over other territories. For example, colonisation, use of military force, economic control or by other means.

import

Buying goods or services from another country for the purposes of trade.

income

Money individuals and businesses receive in exchange for work, production of goods and services, and as a return on investments.

independent representative

An individual member of parliament – also known as an independent – who does not belong to any political party.

Industrial Revolution (the)

Development in the 18th and 19th centuries arising from technological innovations that transformed agrarian societies to urban-based societies with industrial manufacturing economies.

inflation

The rise in the general level of prices levels of good and services, leading to a decrease in purchasing power.

innovation

The development of more effective processes, products and ideas, enhancing business efficiency, productivity and performance. It can drive business success by introducing new ideas, improving existing services, and fostering growth and adaptability in the marketplace.

interdependence

The joint dependence between participants in an economy; that is, the reliance of consumers, workers, businesses and governments on each other.

internal migration

The movement of people from living in one defined area to living in another within a country. For example, movement from cities to non-metropolitan coastal locations, or between states and territories.

investment

The use of funds to generate returns or profit over time, through the increasing value of an asset, income generation or both.

judge

A person who interprets how the law applies in civil and criminal cases and makes impartial decisions about cases in court.

judiciary

One of the three branches of government, the judiciary's role is to interpret and apply the law impartially to ensure justice is upheld and disputes are resolved fairly.

jury

A group of citizens who, as part of the justice process in criminal trials, determine guilt or otherwise. In civil trials, juries decide fault and damages.

justice

The concept that all people have the right to fair treatment and equal access to the benefits of society.

justice system

A system of laws and rulings which protect community members and their property. For example, all Australians have, under the law, the right to seek justice.

kinship

A system used to decide how people relate to each other and their roles, responsibilities and duties. A feature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' social organisation and family relationships.

Kokoda

A seven-month battle in World War II fought in 1942 between Japan and the Allies. This battle was a turning point in stopping the advance of Japan across the Pacific and towards Australia.

L

landform

An individual surface feature of Earth identified by its shape. For example, a dune, plateau, canyon, beach, plain, hill, river or valley.

landscape

The visible appearance of an area, created by a combination of geological, geomorphological, biological and cultural layers that have evolved over time, and as perceived and valued by people.

law/s

A system of rules that a particular country or community recognises as regulating the actions of its members and which it may enforce by imposing penalties and sanctions.

law (civil)

Deals with non-criminal matters. It allows an individual to bring actions against other members of the public.

law (common)

Case law or precedent, body of English law traditionally based on custom and court decisions developed by judges through decisions of earlier courts and an understanding of current context.

law (criminal)

The body of law that relates to crime. It regulates the way people behave towards each other and includes the punishment of people who violate these laws.

law (customary)

Acknowledged behaviour by individuals and groups who recognise the benefits of behaving in accordance with other people's expectations and customs. Here this refers to the customary law of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; however, in Australia, customary law is subject to constitutional and common law.

law (statutory)

Written law (initially in the form of a bill) that has been passed through all stages of Parliament, has received the monarch's (or monarch's representative, such as the Governor-General or Governor) assent and has been proclaimed.

legal obligations (international)

Influence on Australian law of international principles or custom (e.g. the conduct of relationships or business) and conventions to which Australia is a signatory (e.g. human rights).

legal system

The set of laws of a particular country and the way in which they are interpreted and enforced.

legislature

One of the three branches of government. The legislature's function is to create laws, formulate policies and represent the interests of the public. It also acts as a check on the executive branch by providing oversight, approving appointments and passing legislation.

liveability

An assessment of what a place is like to live in using particular criteria. For example, environmental quality, crime and safety, education and health provision, access to shops and services, recreational facilities and cultural activities.

living standard

The amount of wealth, comfort, material goods and necessities that a particular individual, society or country has.

lobby group

A group that advocates with the intention of influencing community attitudes or the decisions of politicians, ministers or government.

Lorenz curve

A graphical representation that illustrates the distribution of income or wealth inequality within an economy, often used in conjunction with the Gini coefficient.

M

market

Exchange of goods, services or resources between buyers and sellers.

media

The forms of communication between a source and receivers, including television, radio, print media, digital and online media as well as forms of social media. The term usually refers to mass media and the ability of media to inform and influence people.

medieval

Historical period from the fall of the Roman Empire in Western Europe c. 500 AD (CE) to the Renaissance c. 1500 AD (CE), characterised by an agrarian society, contact between societies and new ideas.

modern

The 'modern' period covers history from the beginning of the Industrial Revolution around 1750 CE to the present.

monarchy

A form of government in which the supreme authority is actually or nominally ruled by a monarch, such as a king or a queen. The monarch usually holds the power by birthright and not merit. Australia is a constitutional monarchy, where the monarch's power is limited by a constitution.

multicultural

The preservation of different cultures or cultural identities within a unified society such as a state or nation.

National Sorry Day

An annual event held on 26 May in Australia to commemorate the Stolen Generations and which marks the anniversary of the tabling of the *Bringing Them Home* report in the Australian Parliament in 1997.

nationalism

The feeling of belonging to a people, a place and a common culture. When a nation becomes the primary loyalty, it gives rise to movements of national independence.

native title

Recognition that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have rights to and interests in lands and waters, as set out in Australian law, according to their traditional law and customs.

non-renewable

Of or relating to resources developed by geological processes over time which cannot be replenished quickly and are finite. For example, mineral deposits and fossil fuels.

opinion polls

An assessment of public opinion by questioning a representative sample, especially as the basis for forecasting the results of voting.

opportunity cost

The value of the next best alternative that is forgone whenever a choice is made.

parliament

An assembly of elected representatives where government is formed, laws are made, government work is examined and the people are represented; it usually comprises a lower house and an upper house.

parliamentary majority

A political party or coalition of parties that has the support of the majority of members in the lower house to form government (i.e. 50 per cent plus one) to pass its bills and carry out its policies.

political party

An organisation that represents a group of people with similar political philosophies or ideas. The aim of a political party is to get its members elected to Parliament so that it can hold political power and their ideas can influence the way Australia is governed.

precedent

A precedent is a principle established in a previous legal case that is either binding on or persuasive for a court or other tribunal when deciding subsequent cases with similar issues or facts.

preferential voting

A voting system that ranks candidates by preference, requiring a candidate to achieve an absolute majority (50 per cent plus one) to win. If no candidate obtains a majority, the candidate with the fewest first preferences is eliminated, and their votes are redistributed according to second preferences. This process continues until one candidate secures an absolute majority. It is the primary voting method in Australian politics.

prehistory

Historical period before the existence of written records, characterised by the development of cultural practices and organised societies.

presumption of innocence

The presumption of innocence imposes on the prosecution the burden of proving the charge and guarantees that no guilt can be presumed until the charge has been proved beyond reasonable doubt.

prevention, mitigation and preparedness

Prevention and mitigation are actions taken in advance to decrease or eliminate the impact of a hazardous event on people, communities and the environment, by actions including, for example, lessening the hazard and reducing the vulnerability of a community. Preparedness refers to actions taken to create and maintain the capacity of communities to respond to, and recover from, natural disasters, through measures like planning, community education, information management, communications and warning systems.

producer

An individual or business involved in the production of goods and services.

productivity

In Economics, this refers to the efficiency with which an economy employs resources to produce goods and services. In Geography, this includes the amount and rate of production which occurs in an ecosystem.

proportional representation

The representation of parties, groups or individuals in a legislature in proportion to the number of votes they receive in an election. In Australia, proportional representation describes the way candidates are elected in multi-member electorates, such as the Senate.

R

referendum

A vote held about a change to the Australian Constitution. Any change needs approval from a national majority of electors in states and territories and a majority of electors in the majority of states.

region

An area in which the various parts have something in common that distinguishes them from neighbouring regions. Regions can be divisions of a nation (e.g. the Wheatbelt of Western Australia) or larger than a nation (e.g. South-East Asia or a climatic zone).

regulation

A principle, rule or law that is designed to control or govern an activity, organisation or system.

renewable

Of or relating to resources which can be replenished because they are naturally replaced, or can be replaced, such as solar power, animal life and timber.

representative democracy

A system of government in which electors choose representatives to a parliament to make laws on their behalf.

responsibilities

Obligations associated with living in a modern society. For example, paying taxes and attending jury service, or businesses honouring their consumer guarantees.

rights

Entitlements associated with living in a modern society. For example, people in Australia enjoy the right to vote and freedom of speech.

rules

A set of explicit or understood regulations or principles governing conduct or procedure in a particular area of activity. For example, school rules or the rules of cricket.

rule of law

Established legal principle that all people are subject to the law and have equal rights before the law, that the administration of the law is impartial, and that judges are independent.

S

Sahul

The ancient mega-continent that included what is now Australia.

scale

Looking at the size, scope or magnitude of an issue, or considering how the issue varies or impacts different levels, such as local, regional, national or global contexts.

scarcity

The economic problem of the gap between unlimited wants and limited resources available to satisfy those wants.

secret ballot

A voting method in which a voter's choices in an election or a referendum are anonymous. On election day in Australia, voters are provided with a private polling booth to complete their ballot paper, to ensure the secrecy of their vote.

separation of powers

The acknowledged division between the executive, legislature (parliament) and judiciary. These separations act as checks and balances on each other, to prevent excessive concentration of power in one group.

settlement

Any type of place where people live on a permanent basis. Two major categories of settlements are rural and urban. Rural settlements are those where people are often involved in primary industries and located in country areas. Urban settlements are those where people mainly work in secondary and tertiary industries.

social cohesion

The ability of a society's members to cooperate in the community, often demonstrated through common values, beliefs or behaviours. Social cohesion allows individuals to see themselves as part of a greater whole and creates a sense of belonging.

social media

Web-based platforms that allow users to create, share and interact with content and each other in online communities, significantly influencing communication, culture and business.

spatial distribution

The arrangement of particular phenomena or activities across the surface of the Earth.

spatial variation

The difference or variation (in terms of population, population density, gross domestic product, life expectancy etc.) over an area of the Earth's surface.

specialisation

The ways in which individuals, industries or economies focus their efforts or resources on a specific area of expertise or production to increase efficiency in that area.

standard of living

Measures or indicators of wealth, welfare or material comfort of the average person in a population, typically measured using gross domestic product or the Human Development Index.

stewardship

One of the many world views that informs ways of achieving sustainability. When applied to the environment, stewardship is an ethical position that supports the careful management of environmental resources for the benefit of present and future generations. Stewards do not own resources; they only manage them.

Stolen Generations (the)

A name given to the generations of Aboriginal children removed from their families in the 20th century as a result of the policies of Australian and state and territory governments.

superannuation

Lump sum or regular payments individuals receive on retirement from income invested by the individual and their employer. For example, corporate, industry, retail and self-managed funds.

supply

The amount of goods and services that are available; the amount of goods or services producers are willing and able to produce and offer for sale at a particular price at a particular time.

supply chain

A system of sequenced and interconnected processes in the production and distribution of goods and services in an economy.

sustainability

The concept of sustainability is about the capacity of the environment to continue to support our lives and the lives of other living creatures into the future. Sustainability is both a goal and a way of thinking about how to progress towards that goal. Progress towards environmental sustainability depends on the maintenance or restoration of the environmental functions that sustain all life and human wellbeing (economic and social).

sustainable development

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development values resources for their future, as well as current, uses.

T

terra nullius

A concept in international law meaning 'a territory belonging to no-one' or 'a territory over which no-one claims ownership'. The concept has been used to justify the colonisation of Australia.

topography

The study of Earth's surface, including the arrangement of or shape of natural and human features.

trade-off

A sacrifice that must be made when choosing one option over others when making a decision. The preferred (next best) alternative is known as the opportunity cost.

Traditional Owners

The original owners of a particular region, based on their traditional and cultural associations with the land, who have ongoing traditional and cultural connections to that Country/Place.

tribunal

A body which makes largely administrative, rather than judicial, decisions, with the exception of some state tribunals that may exercise some judicial power in small disputes, such as tenancy issues.

truth-telling

A reconciliation process involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people recording evidence of the impacts of colonisation and the broader community acknowledging past atrocities.

Uluru Statement from the Heart

A resolution calling for the establishment of a First Nations Voice in the Australian Constitution, issued by a 2017 constitutional convention involving First Nations Australian leaders.

unemployment

Occurs when people who are willing and able to work and actively seeking work cannot secure jobs, typically expressed as a proportion of the labour force in a given population or economy.

urban

An area which has a high concentration of buildings and infrastructure (predominantly towns and cities).

urbanisation

The process of economic and social change in which an increasing proportion of the population of a country or region live in urban areas.

voting system

The procedure used to count votes cast in an election, including the count of first preference votes or the distribution of second and other preferences. For example, preferential or first-past-the-post voting.

Washington system

United States system of government influencing Australia's Constitution. For example, division of powers based on a federal system, a court to settle disputes between jurisdictions and a two-chamber legislature.

water scarcity

Lack of sufficient available water resources to meet demand due to water shortages (physical), lack of money to use adequate water sources (economic) or the unequal distribution of water resources.

water security

When all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, clean and safe water.

water resource

A natural resource existing in different forms (e.g. freshwater, groundwater, precipitation), which is irregularly distributed and useful to people and their activities (e.g. agriculture, industry, household).

weather

The state of the atmosphere at a particular place and time, including wind, temperature, atmospheric pressure, humidity, precipitation and cloudiness.

wellbeing

An overall measure of quality of life for individuals and society.

Westminster system

United Kingdom system of government influencing Australia's Constitution (elected representatives make law, the Executive comprising ministers led by the Prime Minister is answerable to parliament).

Acknowledgements

Food Security

Adapted from: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. (n.d.). *What is Food Security?* Retrieved March, 2026, from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-update/what-is-food-security>